



THE ARTS COUNCIL OF
GREATER NEW HAVEN

TESTIMONY FOR APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
February 10, 2016

My name is Cynthia Clair. I'm the executive director of the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, a regional arts agency that serves 15 towns, over 120 cultural organizations and hundreds of individual artists. I am also a board member of the Connecticut Arts Alliance, a statewide arts advocacy organization.

I am here to address arts funding within the DECD budget. The governor's proposed budget cuts and consolidates arts, tourism, and other department funding. Furthermore, his proposal reduces directed funding to many arts and cultural organizations by 25% and institutes an ill-advised plan to leave distribution of these pooled funds to the state controller. Arts organizations have been weakened by repeated state cuts over the last few years reducing their capacity. For FY16, arts and culture funding was reduced by 10% reduction followed by two rescissions. At a time when growing the economy remains a high priority, I urge you to uphold your investment in arts and culture, an investment with a proven positive return.

Connecticut's arts and culture is a \$653 million industry. Our industry supports over 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs, which generate \$462.5 million in household income. Connecticut's non-profit arts and culture organizations spend \$455.5 million annually, leveraging \$197.5 in additional spending on restaurants, parking, and hotel rooms. We are essential to tourism—our organizations create the events, the exhibits, performances, and festivals that bring visitors to our state.

As our economy continues to evolve as a knowledge economy, employers need to attract highly skilled, creative employees. Connecticut yearns to lure new businesses, including young

entrepreneurs. Connecticut needs the creative climate and community vibrancy that the arts and culture create.

In our greater New Haven region, the arts are a source of great pride. Our cultural institutions present free museum exhibits; touring Broadway show; a wide array of classical, jazz and pop concerts; theatrical world premieres; and art, music and dance classes for all ages. Our cultural organizations are committed to the community-- they partner with schools, senior centers, libraries, and hospitals; bringing education and enjoyment through the arts.

I understand that the state faces immense fiscal challenges, but ask that you be equitable as you consider cuts. I implore you to preserve the state's small investment in arts and culture. The arts are vital to our future, integral to creating vibrant communities that will entice businesses, talent and tourists, while engaging our residents.

Cynthia Clair
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